

Local officials celebrate opening for Hartly Family Learning Center

New facility will offer child care and education while serving as center of the community

HARTLY, Del. (July 30, 2014) – Connie Richard has a background in teaching and administration, so taking on the operations of an early learning center would seem like a natural career move.

But as someone who was born and raised in Hartly, the success of her new business, Hartly Family Learning Center, means so much more.

Alan Levin, Director of the Delaware Economic Development Office, joined local government officials, residents and members of the business community on Wednesday in welcoming Richard and her business to Hartly with a grand opening and ribbon cutting celebration.

Hartly Family Learning Center offers full-time care for children ages 18 months to 5 years old; part-time preschool programs for children ages 3 and 4 years old; before and after-school care for kids ages 5 through 12; and a full summer camp program.

“Since the start of my administration, education has been one of our top priorities. But the impact of Connie’s new business goes beyond offering expert child care and enrichment programs,” Markell said. “Parents become more productive and healthy employees when they know their children are learning in a safe environment. Hartly Family Learning Center is providing much-needed services in Hartly and the west Dover area.”

The center offers developmentally age appropriate enrichment programs, as well as private music instruction for piano, violin, viola and guitar. It will also serve as a community center, offer community enrichment programs in the evenings and on weekends, and will be available for rentals for private parties and other events. The business has 14 employees in its new 6,375-square-foot facility, including five lead teachers, a music teacher, three assistant teachers, two interns, two office support employees and a kitchen manager.

Hartly Family Learning Center received a State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) participation loan with Dover Federal Credit Union to help with financing. The program was designed to enhance access to capital and lower interest rates provided to small businesses.

“I am very appreciative of the opportunity made available through the Small Business Credit Initiative. Through the program, I was able to leverage funds needed to start our business, and we would not be open right now without it. DEDO worked with us and our bank to make this dream a reality,” Richard said. “Hartly is a small town with great potential and wonderful people. We found the need for a child care and community center here, but as a small start-up we faced some obstacles. We were able to overcome those obstacles through the support of Governor Markell’s

office and DEDO.”

Alan Levin, Director of the Delaware Economic Development Office, said Richard and her business are the prototypical Delaware small business success story.

“Connie wanted to serve the community she grew up in, and through hard work, perseverance and the courage to launch her own business, she has achieved that goal,” Levin said. “One of DEDO’s main objectives is helping new businesses launch and grow in Delaware. But we also realize that our towns need places like Hartly Family Learning Center to serve as centers of their communities and provide a safe and nurturing place for their children to grow. We’re proud to have played a role in the launch of this business.”

Lynne Schaefer, Vice President of Business Services for Dover Federal Credit Union, said her company is proud to partner with DEDO to help small business owners like Richard realize their dreams.

“Our goal is to help businesses obtain the financing they need to open their doors. But Connie’s hard work and determination made it all possible,” Schaefer said. “Hartly Learning Center is a much-needed facility in this area, providing a safe environment for the area’s children to play and learn while their parents are hard at work.”

About Hartly Family Learning Center

Hartly Family Learning Center serves families through high-quality, developmentally appropriate children’s early care and education programs, striving to build a strong community by serving individuals and families with outreach programs carefully designed to meet their specific needs. The business offers full-time care for children ages 18 months to 5 years old; part-time preschool programs for children ages 3 and 4 years old; before and after-school care for kids ages 5 through 12; and a full summer camp program. Hartly Family Learning Center also offers enrichment programs, as well as private music instruction for piano, violin, viola and guitar. It will also be available for private rentals. The business is owned and operated by Hartly native Connie Richard. Visit www.hartlyfamily.org.

About the Delaware Economic Development Office

The Delaware Economic Development Office is an executive state agency responsible for attracting new investors and businesses to the state, promoting the expansion of existing industry, assisting small and minority-owned businesses, promoting and developing tourism and creating new and improved employment opportunities for all citizens of the State. Visit dedo.delaware.gov.

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